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MEDICAL

Letter No. 13
August 21, 1943

Gentlemen:

This letter is sent to you by the Surgeon Generals of the Army, Navy and the U. S. Public Health Service, with the cooperation of the Committee on Information of the Division of Medical Sciences of the National Research Council.

In the Proceedings of the Staff Meetings of the Mayo Clinic for July 28, 1943, L. M. Eaton indicates that narcolepsy can be treated with considerable satisfaction utilizing desoxyephedrine hydrochloride. Although the majority of 15 patients found it preferable to amphetamine, more critical studies need to be made. None of the patients complained of untoward reactions.

Blast in water continues to arouse great interest. The most recent report from Great Britain is published in the Lancet for July 31, 1943, page 119. Major J. C. Goligher, Major D. P. King and Lt. Col. H. T. Simmons unite in a discussion of 17 cases. All these patients had injury to the abdomen, including intramural hematomas and perforations of the intestine, the stomach and the lower end of the esophagus. The only constant sign of injury outside the alimentary tract itself was a retroperitoneal hemorrhage behind the right colic flexure. The authors conclude that the injurious range for man of a charge exploding at depth is probably about 20 yards, but there are apparently considerable individual variations in susceptibility. "The natural and wisest course for a person threatened by blast in water will be to get as far as possible from the impending explosion; while doing so he should swim on his back, if this will not seriously delay him."

Carrion's disease is the name applied to infection with *Bartonella bacilliformis*. The severe anemic stage of the disease is known as Oroya fever. The less severe eruptive stage is called verruga peruana. A review of the subject is provided by Calderon Howe, M. D., who studied the condition at the National Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Lima, Peru. His article in the Archives of Internal Medicine, August 1943, page 147, tells of a study of 203 residents of the regions in which the disease is endemic. The incubation period is thought to be ten days to three weeks. Usually one attack of the disease confers lasting immunity. There are occasional instances with recurrence of the typical eruption. Many persons with actual inapparent infection harbor the organism, as shown by blood cultures. These carriers spread the disease. The chief symptoms, in addition to the anemia, are elevation of temperature, extreme fatigue, general prostration, dizziness, anorexia and thirst. Later come pain in the long bones and arthralgia, also an eruption over bony prominences and joints. In three cases the erythrocyte count fell below 1,000,000 cells per cubic millimeter, and the hemoglobin was correspondingly low.